



**Contact:**

Ellis Smith

esmith@chattanooga.gov

770.331.7191 (cell)

## **Mayor Tim Kelly Names New Police Chief**

*Kelly announces appointment of 25-year law enforcement veteran Celeste Murphy to be Chattanooga's next chief of police*

**Chattanooga, Tenn. (Tuesday, Feb. 22, 10 a.m.)** — Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly on Tuesday announced the appointment of Celeste Murphy, a 25-year law enforcement veteran who brings a demonstrated ability to reduce crime and proven commitment to community policing, as the city's next police chief.

"I am thrilled to announce my appointment of Celeste Murphy to be Chattanooga's next Chief of Police. She has a demonstrated track record of keeping people safe and reducing crime, and she brings a life-long commitment to civil rights and community policing," said Kelly. "We're fortunate to have her experience, her leadership, and her heart in Chattanooga. We have a great police department and Celeste is the right person to help take it to the next level."



Murphy, whose appointment is subject to confirmation by Chattanooga City Council, helped drive and maintain a double-digit decrease in overall crime in her precincts as Deputy Chief of the Field Operations Division, and has also led department efforts to provide educational and life skills to the city's youth, including working with local nonprofits to provide alternative pathways to criminal justice involvement.

"As chief, I will bring every resource, every relationship and every ounce of experience to meet this challenge and keep our city and our neighborhoods safe," Murphy said. "We are going to expose the humanity in each other by embracing what we have in common. We will work together instead of against each other through conversations and partnerships between the department and the community. And we will enhance both our focus on stopping crime as well as our work to address its root causes."

Over the last two decades, Murphy rose through the ranks at the Atlanta Police Department, serving as patrol officer, detective, sergeant, lieutenant, captain, major and deputy chief. She has worked in

or supervised every division of the department, including Special Operations, Special Projects, Field Operations, Strategy, and Community Services.

She has taken on multiple high-level assignments for the department, including overseeing policing at the Hartsfield Jackson Atlanta International Airport, as well as managing Violent Crime Interdiction. During the period of unrest after the killing of George Floyd, she managed approximately 900 patrol officers and worked with the community to quickly restore the peace.

As chief, Murphy will focus on three key issues:

- **Violent crime reduction**
  - Leverage technology, interagency coordination and preventative measures to focus on and disrupt the small percentage of people who bear responsibility for violent acts.
  - Enhance confidence in neighborhood safety through community engagement.
- **Community policing**
  - Enhance social media engagement on crime prevention and education.
  - Conduct in-person events to encourage resident participation and engagement, and work with neighborhoods on nuisance properties to proactively address problem locations.
- **Youth engagement**
  - Partner with schools, Hamilton County and businesses to provide mentorships, internships and job opportunities.
  - Leverage dedicated officers to engage with youth and guardians seven days a week. Officers will proactively monitor areas where juveniles tend to congregate, and work with guardians, parents and the court system to make youth initiatives and diversion programs available.

Prior to her appointment as Chattanooga's next police chief, Murphy served since January 2021 as the deputy chief of the Community Services Division, which encompasses units that are directly responsible for Atlanta's community-oriented policing.

In that role, Murphy coordinated with the non-profit Policing Alternatives & Diversion (PAD) initiative, which gives officers the discretion to divert offenders committing low-level offenses to social services, and involves a holistic approach for individuals who may suffer from mental illness or homelessness.

She also oversaw five additional sections, including Special Operations (SWAT, aviation unit, motors unit, accident investigations, mounted patrol, special events, and the community liaison unit), Code Enforcement, Strategic Response (responsible for bringing resources to bear for major events or protests), Narcotics and undercover investigations, as well as security at Hartsfield Jackson Atlanta International Airport — the busiest airport in the world.

The Atlanta Police Department has an authorized strength of 2,000 officers, and serves a population of more than 500,000 residents. In 2019, the city received more than 1 million calls for police, fire or medical service.

Murphy will make history as the first female officer ever to serve as Chattanooga's chief of police. She also made history in her previous role with the Atlanta Police Department, where she was the first female ever to command two different precincts at the rank of major and four different divisions at the rank of deputy chief.

Murphy is a mother of four children, and holds degrees from Syracuse University and Saint Leo University. She succeeds Eric Tucker, who served as interim chief following the retirement of David Roddy.

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